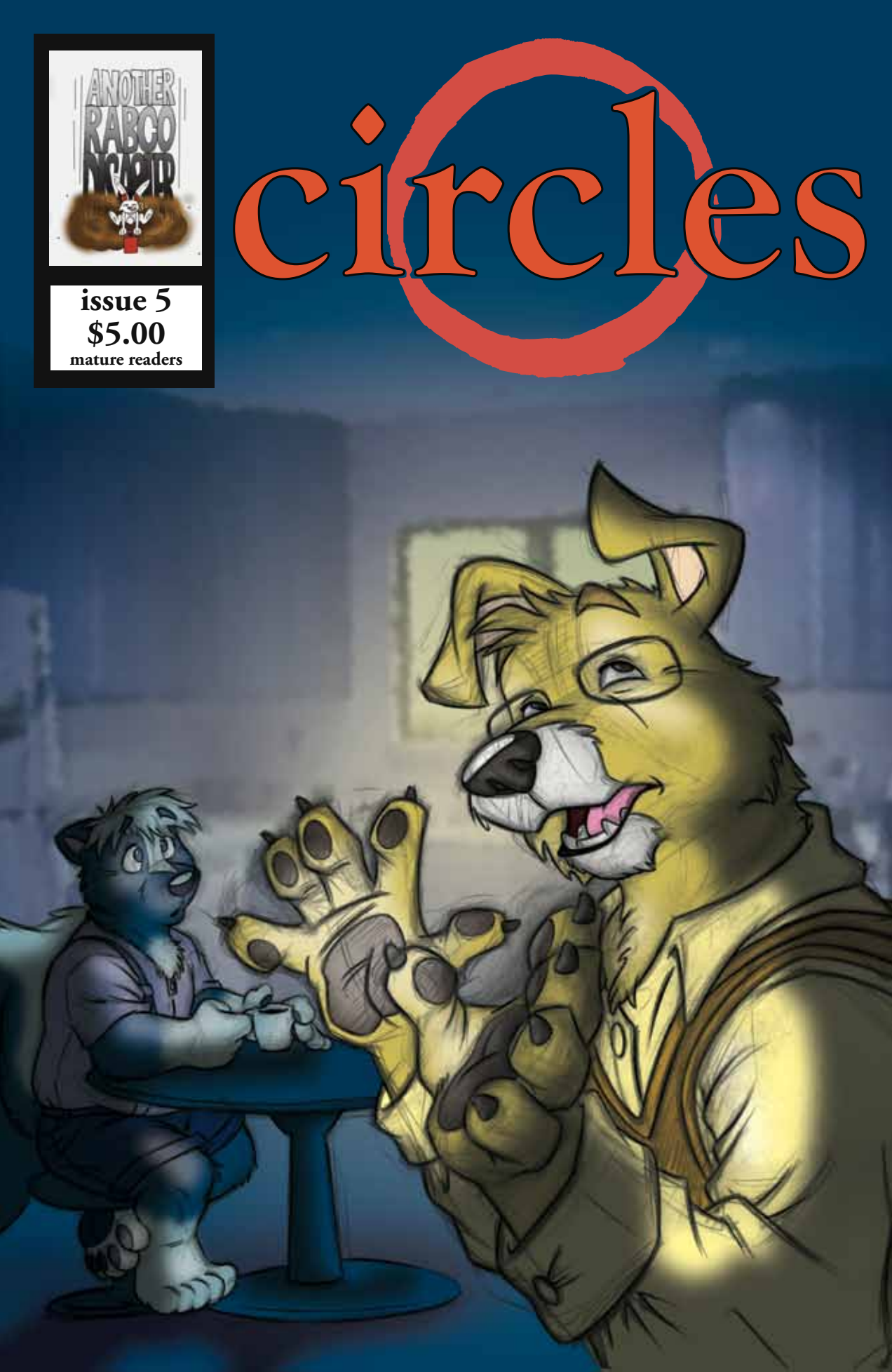
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From the Writer's Desk

Here at long last is the much-anticipated, long-awaiting Circles #5. At least this time, we had precedent for taking as long with a comic as we did with this one. What can we say? I hope y'all know that we would do the comic full time and put out an issue a month if we could, but those nasty things called our jobs compel us to do otherwise. And without these "jobs" as they're called, we wouldn't get those green bits of paper that seem so useful in our day and age.

But, as I say, here we are! Issue 5. A year has passed since Marty first met Paulie in the garden at Six Kinsey Circle, and it seems like its been a good year all the way round. I'm sure you noticed that the first year of continuity of the story largely centered around Marty, especially in regards to his relationship with Taye. Now with that relationship consumated, we can let Marty relax a bit and focus on some of the other members of the household.

This issue is about Paulie, and it was a joy to write and research. Next issue, we'll be seeing more about Doug, and we'll finally see what Paulie's love has been brooding about for the last couple of issues. After that, we'll be doing stories centering around Arthur, Ken, and Taye. And you'll be seeing a lot more of a few of the supporting characters as well.

As of my writing this, it's late May, 2004, and I find myself incredulous that we could ever have thought we would bring out 4 issues a year (oh, we were so young and innocent!) My excitement to keep bringing you Circles is as high as ever, so you can look forward to us following this story to its end, however long it may take us. We hope you'll continue to forgive us for choosing to take quality over quantity and that you think this issue was worth the wait.

As long as I'm here, I want to take a moment to thank our fans...and I'm not talking about the kind that spin and whirr...though maybe I have seen a few of you doing that at conventions. You guys have been great, and I really do enjoy talking to you online and meeting you at conventions. We're all planning on being at Anthrocon '04 (where you may well have purchased this), and then Steve and I will be at Feral 2004, where we've been asked to be the Guests of Honor! That's really exciting to me, and I want to thank the Feral folks for inviting us! I hope we see folks there. Another thanks to our fans for getting us nominated for an Ursa Major award for Best Comic Book! We're up against some big competition, not the least of which is Usagi Yojimbo, which has won for the first two years of the awards. I don't think any of us are expecting to win, but we have our fingers crossed, just the same. ;)

Also, by the time you read this, it's extremely likely that Steve and I will have tied the knot. Gay marriage is legal in Massachusetts (for however long), and we intend to seize the opportunity while its here. One wonders where our Kinsey Circle boys will be in the Spring of 2004.

Everyone stay well!

- Andy

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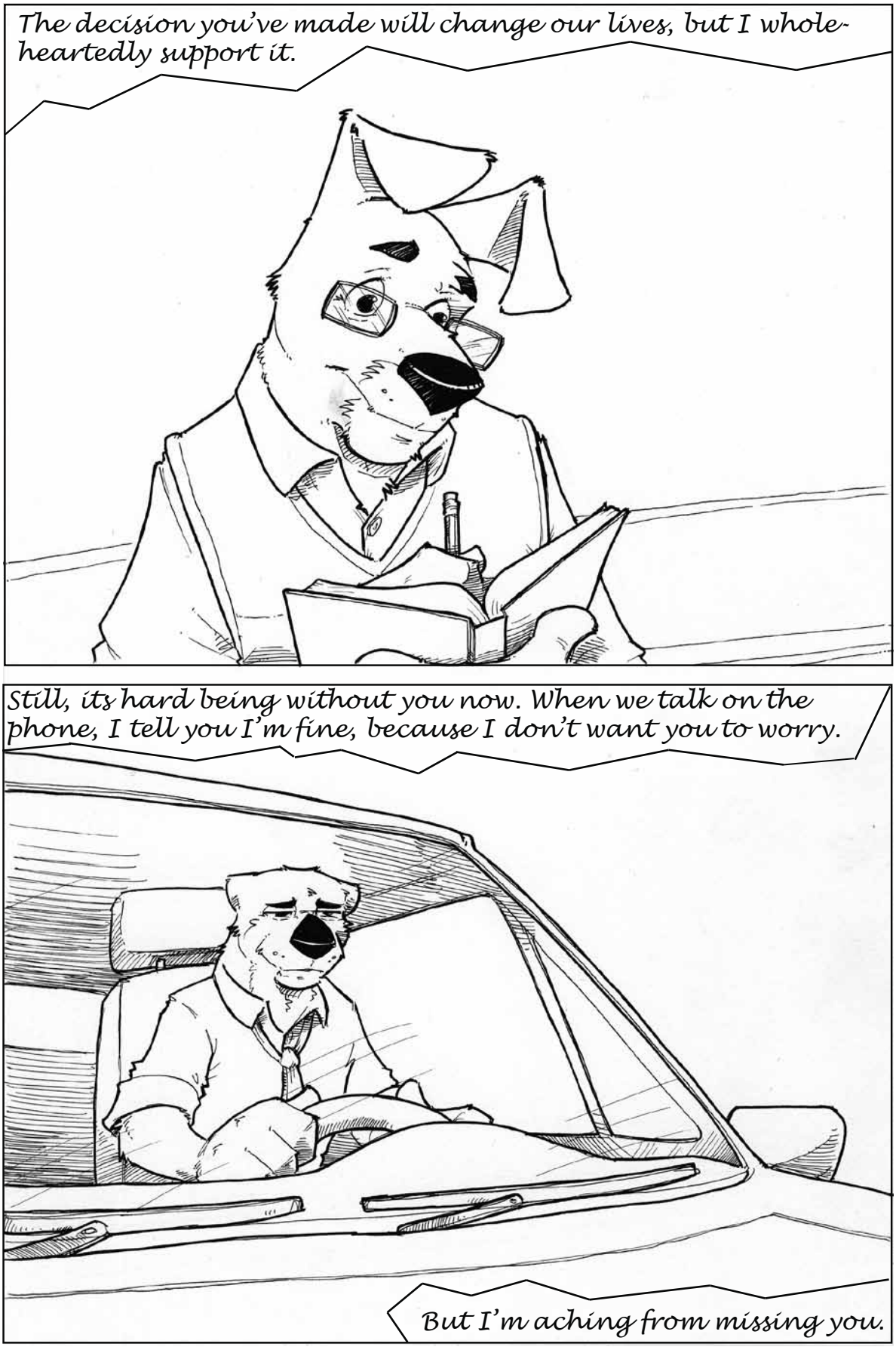
Dear Douglas,
A year ago, I wonder if we could've known where the year would take us. So much has happened since then.


The decision you've made will change our lives, but I whole-heartedly support it.
Still, its hard being without you now. When we talk on the phone, I tell you I'm fine, because I don't want you to worry.
But I'm aching from missing you.

Marty and Taye are well, of course. My heart tells me that those two are going to be fine together, whatever the coming storms.

Ken has really taken a liking to that Michael fellow he met at Christmas. Although they seem to "break it off" from time to time, they keep getting back together for weeks at a time.

I suspect both of them are a lot more attached to each other than either is willing to let on. I hope that turns into something steady for Ken. Then I wouldn't have to worry.

Arthur seems to be trying to take up the slack while you're gone, throwing himself into your community projects with gusto. I think he misses you a lot.

Mrs. Nussbaum says she's going to bake you an apple pie when you get home...so there's some extra incentive.

Oh…saw John today. He says hello.

There's not much more to tell, just now. I'm content to have things quiet.

But without you, they're much TOO quiet. Come home and make my life noisy again.

Love, Paulie

Well, Mr. Mayhew. Taking the night air?
Hello, boys. Yes, being inside is making me stir crazy. I felt the need for some elbow room.
I think everyone's out tonight. The weather is so nice. Gonna be summer before we know it.
Not TOO soon, I hope. I like spring.
Spring is always my favorite time of year. Everything seems to come alive again. Hardly an original thought, but true.
Well, the world is alive, but I'm dead on my feet. I shall bid you gentlemen of leisure a good evening.
I'll be up in a bit, love.
Good night, dear.

Is something on your mind, dear?
Not really. But I'm not sleepy. You want some company? Must be a drag not having Doug around.

That's an understatement, dear boy, if ever one was uttered.
Well...

I'll bring the macaroons if you brew the tea.

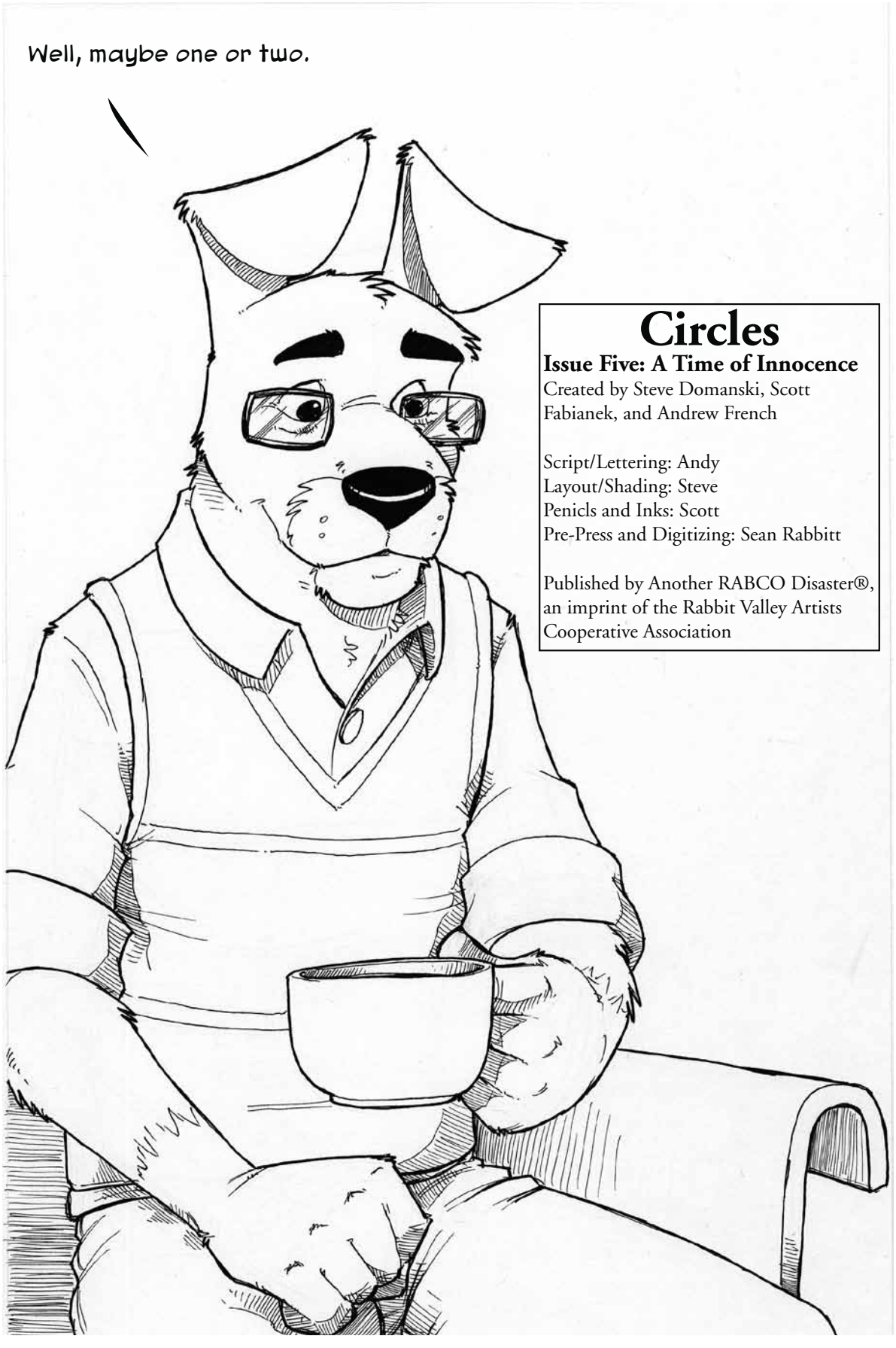
That, my friend, is a deal. I'll meet you in the breezeway.

Do you realize, Paulie, that its only now been a year since we met?
Taye reminded me of that the other day. I was stunned it had only been that long, because it feels like you've always been a part of our little family.

And I feel so comfy with you guys, it's like I've lived here my whole life.
There are definitely worse places to live.
You'd know, I imagine. You've lived here for...what?

Thirty-one years? I moved in with Aunt Ruthie when I was 23. So I've lived here over half my life.
Wow!

Well, when did you move over from England?
About a year before... But you don't want to hear all this nonsense, surely...
Actually, I really do. C'mon, Paulie. You must have a lot of stories in your life.



Circles

Issue Five: A Time of Innocence

Created by Steve Domanski, Scott Fabianek, and Andrew French

Script/Lettering: Andy
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Pre-Press and Digitizing: Sean Rabbitt

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I was born in Salisbury, England, on March 10th, 1958. My parents were both devout Anglicans, and they had come on holiday to see the cathedral. Mum's pregnancy made it dicey, but they were staying with relatives, so Da wasn't worried. Unfortunately, Mum's water broke while we were actually at the cathedral, thus sending Da into utter panic. She always told me that it happened when she was looking up a statue of Mary, so she felt that I was particularly blessed by the Holy Virgin.

Not being a particularly avid Anglican, I've not much followed up on her claim, although I did look for the statue when I visited the cathedral some years later. I couldn't find it, and, frankly, I liked Canterbury cathedral better, and Stonehenge better than both of them. After I was born and Mum recovered, we went home to London, where I grew up.

Mum was actually an American, from Massachusetts. She met Da while visiting relatives in England in 1946, and they married shortly thereafter. She was a very funny woman, I remember. She joked about everything. Sometimes, she could say the most shocking things, but, when I turned to look at her, she'd be wearing this Mona Lisa smile, and there'd be this twinkle in her eye. She was a terrible cook, contrary to the image of mothers everywhere. She once baked biscuits...sorry...cookies and burned them, then tried to pass them off as chocolate cookies.

Da didn't care. He adored her. He was born in Edinburgh, and he never lost his accent. He had a bushy moustache, and he smoked a pipe. He'd served in the navy when he was younger, which, I gather, gave him a permanent concept on what homosexuality was and wasn't. I remember him as being very distant.
Still, our home in London was comfortable, and he provided for us. I'll never forget that.

Mum died when I was ten, and Da remained distant. I grew up mostly with my Auntie Bettina, my mother's cousin from Devonshire, who came to live with us. Auntie was an amazingly plump woman. I used to fancy that she might float off like a balloon someday...

So I kept a tight grip on her hand, just in case.

It was Auntie Bettina who instilled in me a great love of books and reading. She read to me constantly, and her warm, crackly voice is the one I hear in my head whenever I sit down with a book. She had a fondness for fantasy and adventure stories. Through the books we read together, I traveled to ancient Baghdad, Narnia, Wonderland, Mars, Middle Earth, Oz, and Camelot.

Da didn't seem too happy with my Aunt's attentions to me, and I distinctly remember overhearing an argument about her turning me into a nancy-boy. There was only one small problem, which my father utterly failed to notice...

I already was a nancy-boy! I realized, early on, that I didn't have much interest in girls. The sight of other lads, however, interested me greatly. When puberty hit, I began...well...you know...wanking it. And I never thought about girls while doing it. I tried, a few times, but when I forced myself to think in that direction, I would just lose interest. If I thought about some of the boys or men I knew on a regular basis, however, well...let's just say I understood where my tastes lay pretty early on.

I wasn't sure what to do about it. I knew lots of nasty names for boys like me, and sissy was one of the mildest of them.I was pretty sure I didn't want to be called any of them. So I kept it to myself for a long time.

But that all changed with Colin.

Colin was two years older than me, and I sort of idolized him. He was very much the bad boy in my neighborhood. He copped smokes and beers from even older boys than he was, and he was always getting into trouble. He had dropped out of school, and everyone said he was heading for a bad end. All I knew is that he'd paid a little attention to me when I was younger, helping me have my first drink and my first smoke. We were there, in London, when the Beatles began taking the world by storm, and we listened to each new single together in his basement bedroom on an old turntable. He never minded a younger lad hanging about, although his other mates teased him a bit about it.

He's the one that started calling me Paulie. "We're mates, ain't we, Paulie?" he'd say, with a cheeky grin, and I knew that we were about to do something I'd get in trouble for...

And I loved it.

My Da hated it when I hung around with Colin. He made me promise not to visit him, many times, but that was one promise I never quite managed to keep. I liked Colin. He filled a need for a bit of rebellion in my life.

It didn't hurt that I also had a tremendous crush on him.

One day, shortly after my sixteenth birthday, we were running home in the pouring rain, and, when we got to his house, his folks weren't home.

I don't remember exactly what we had been doing in the rain. Some kind of adolescent idiocy, I've no doubt. Something that had started with Colin saying, "We're mates, ain't we, Paulie?"

All I remember is that the rain had been freezing cold, and we were both soaked to the skin. And Colin said, "Well, we're mates, ain't we, Paulie? We can just chuck our gear in the dryer. No problem with mates hanging about like that, is there?"

I recall feeling very nervous as I stripped down to my jockeys with Colin standing there, about to do the same. And I remember feeling my mouth go very dry and getting butterflies in my stomach when I realized he was watching me. He didn't get undressed at first...instead, he grabbed a six-pack, led me down to his basement bedroom, and threw "Beatles For Sale" on the stereo.

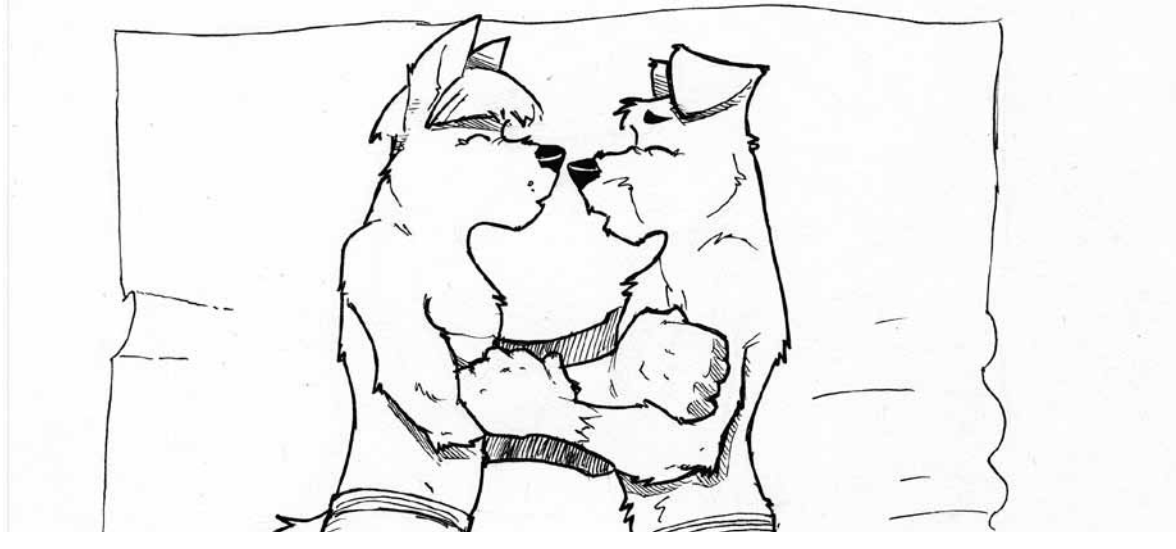
I sat on his bed...just a mattress on the floor, really...drinking a beer, and watching him approach. He kneeled down next to me and whispered in my ear. "We're mates, ain't we, Paulie?" he asked.

I allowed that, of course, we were.

He put his beer down. "Yeah...real good mates," he whispered.

Best of mates, I agreed, watching him finally stripping his clothes off.

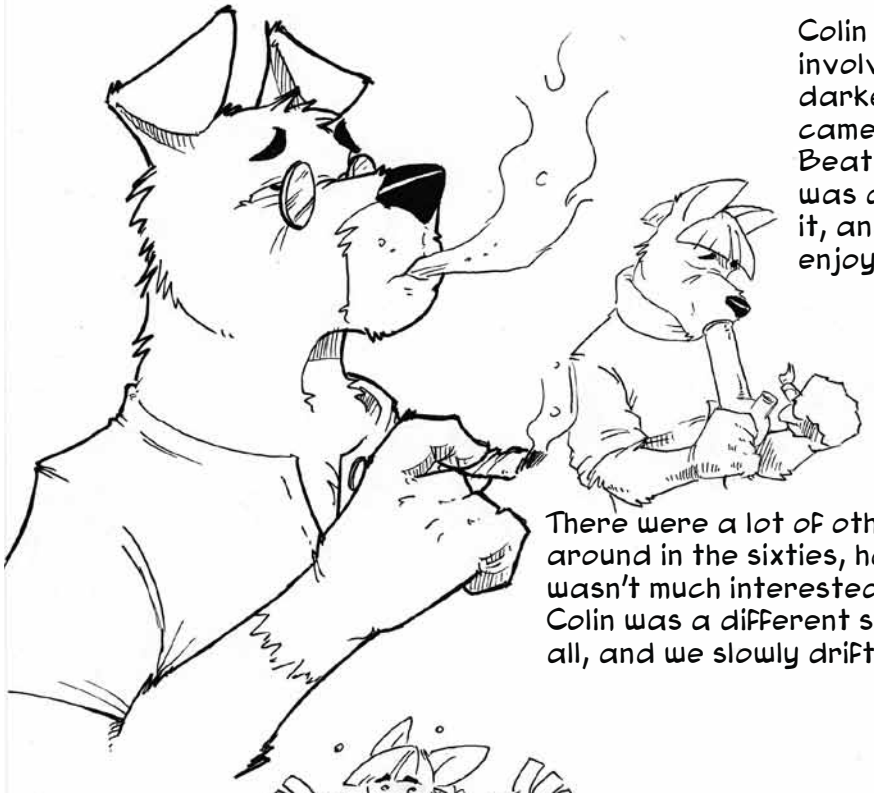
"I know somethin'," he whispered, "that best mates c'n do t'gether..."



After we did it, we were closer than ever, and some of those nasty names I was afraid of got tossed at us by former friends. Colin would always get in the face of anyone who dared comment. He wasn't afraid of the names, or the name-callers, and it helped me learn to be brave.

I knew Colin wasn't happy with his family life. His father drank a lot and could be quite abusive. I also knew that, if Colin was going away somewhere, I was going with him. We talked about running away to America since my Mum had family there.

But things didn't quite happen that way.



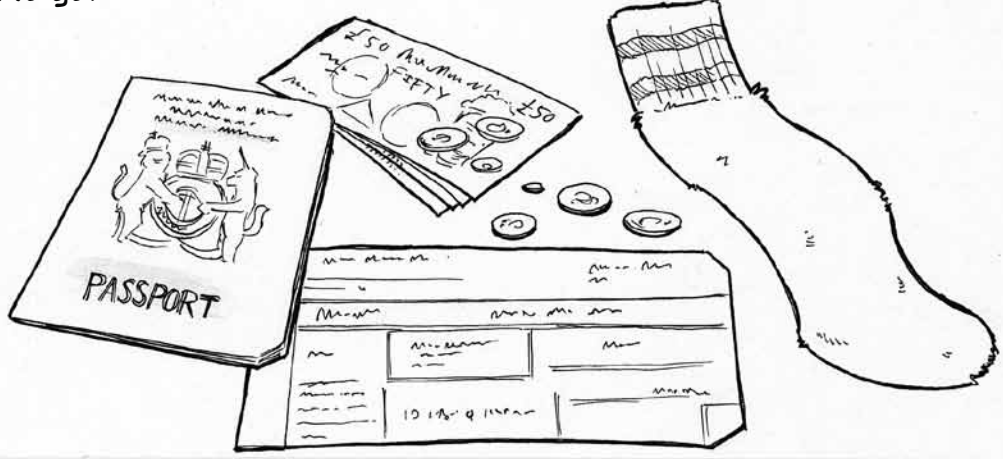
Colin got more and more involved with darker and darker things. After it came out that the Beatles had used pot, I was quite excited to try it, and I definitely enjoyed it.

There were a lot of other drugs drifting around in the sixties, however, and I wasn't much interested in trying them. Colin was a different story. He tried them all, and we slowly drifted apart...

Finally, he ran off, at age 20, and he left me behind. Or maybe, by that time, I was already gone, unwilling to stay and watch what he was doing to himself. It hurt to find he had left without saying goodbye, but I had something new on my horizon.

The summer after my 21st birthday, a little event in New York City called the Stonewall Riots occurred. The clients of a well-known gay bar refused to submit to a regular police raid, and things had apparently just kept on escalating. It's unfair to say it was the beginning of the fight for gay rights, but it was easily the most publicly visible sign that the times were beginning to change.

We had talked about America often, Colin and I, and I decided I wanted to go there, because that's where things seemed to be happening. In retrospect, I probably could've stayed anywhere, but, when you're young, the grass is always greener, so I made up my mind to go. I had been saving up money for years, planning on taking a trip. Now, I finally knew where I wanted to go.



My Auntie Bettina had passed a couple of years before, and I regretted not being able to tell her or my Mum about why I was going and who I really was. I tried to explain it to my ever-distant Da, but he was somewhat less than thrilled. In his own way, he tried to spare me from what he thought of as a terrible choice, as well as to try and explain that he understood what I was going through.

He didn't understand of course, but it was sweet of him to try.

He still drove me to the airport, and he wished me well. He said he hoped I'd come back soon, but I think we both knew that wasn't likely.

I'd only been to Heathrow a couple of times to pick up family members from out of the city who'd come in on holiday. I'd never been through customs or security before, though they were very loose then as compares with these days. I felt like James Bond, threading my way onto the plane, and I tried to act serious and grown-up. Inside, though, I was nervous as can be.

The flight to America was my first time on a plane, and I didn't take to it particularly well. Still, we made it over the puddle in one piece, and I got to visit New York City, where everything seemed to be happening. I got to know a few of the local gay folks, and I got to have a glass of beer in the Stonewall Inn. It's not the same these days, though the statue they've put up is nice. The trouble was, too many of them seemed very phony to me.

Looking back, I realize that I was simply not used to "gay" being a lifestyle; I'd only ever known myself and Colin, after all. At the time, however; I was very turned off by the whole scene. I became a bit disillusioned with the whole city, and I began pondering heading back to England. Before I went, however; I decided to visit Boston, where my mother's family was from.

I opted to take a train to Boston, rather than another plane, both for the savings in money and the more leisurely pace. After a last night of drinking with some of the friends I'd made in New York, I went to Grand Central Station and hopped on my train. It wasn't much like riding the Brit Rail back home. I was used to watching great expanses of green go by, and America seemed so much more developed. I caught glimpses of some other fairly big towns, but nothing to compare with New york. Even Boston, when I spotted it in the distance seemed small by comparison to New York. That was okay with me. I'd had my fill of the biggest city, and I was ready to try something a little more manageable.

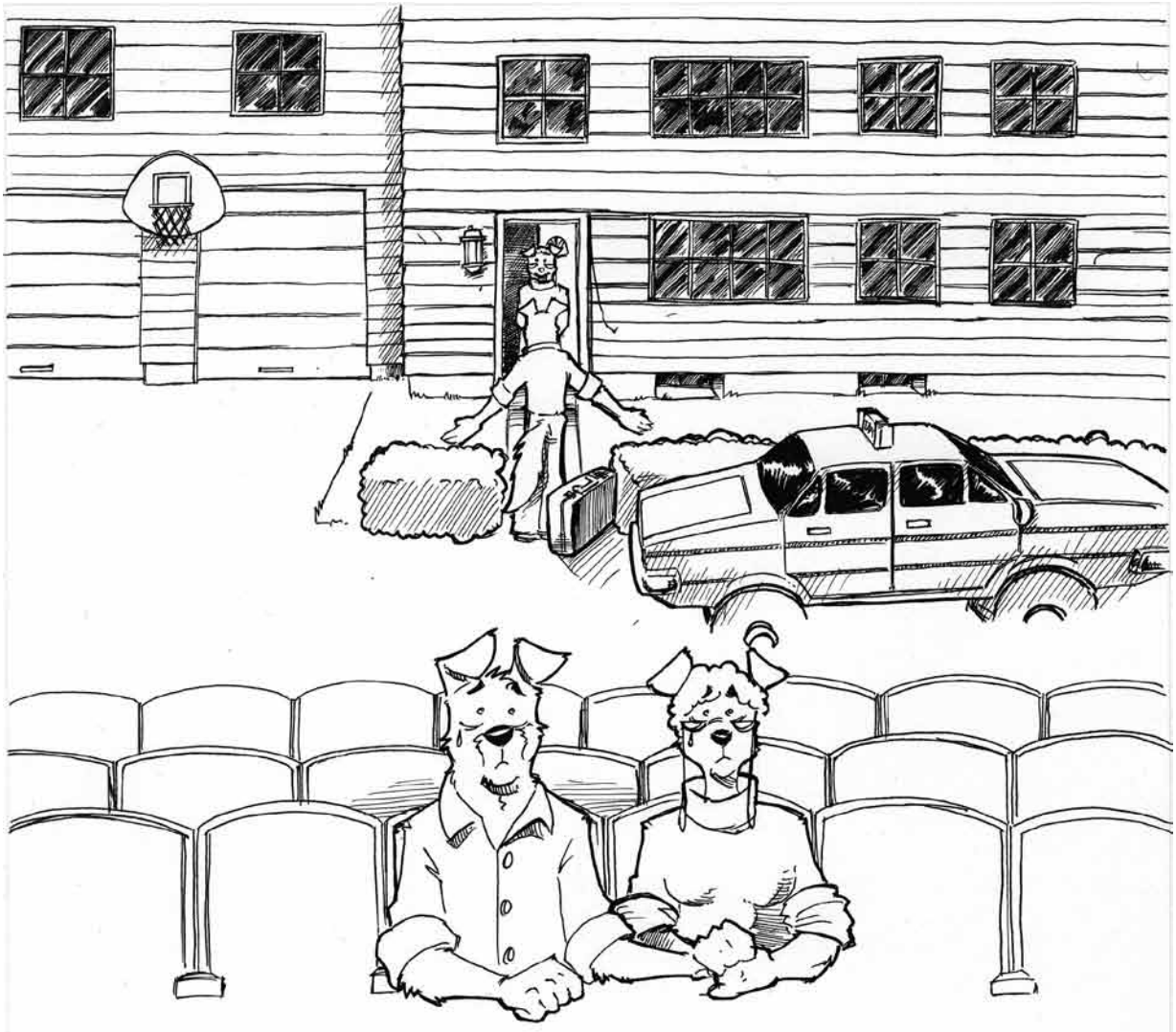
Getting off the train in Boston in 1971, I remember really being struck by its charm. It felt more like a little scooped out corner of London, transplanted across the Atlantic. I had the address of my mother's sister; my Aunt Ruthie, and a standing invitation to visit during my American sojourn. So I found myself wandering down Kinsey Street, looking for number Six. Once I found it, Ruthie was delighted to have me there, and kept saying how much I reminded her of her sister and how cute my accent was.

Aunt Ruthie was a lovely lady who'd made her money in real estate. She'd been quite successful before an ex-husband had successfully made a hostile takeover of her firm, and she was even more successful after the divorce. We got on very famously, and she took me around Boston to the museums and theatres. She even liked going to picture shows, something Colin and I had adored but that my Da and Auntie Bettina hadn't cared for. We saw wonderful movies together at some of Boston's grand old movie houses, most of which are sadly gone. We also did a lot of reading together. Aunt Ruthie's eyesight was going bad, and she was happy to find someone who didn't mind reading to her.

Aunt Ruthie had friends in the local art community and friends in local politics and friends...well...she had friends. Let's leave it there. She had dreams of a park and fountain to be built in Kinsey Circle, and every once in a while, some local politician would try to put that idea into action, but nothing ever truly came of it. She promised me that, if I ever became a famous poet or writer; I should have a statue in her park.

All in all, we just loved each other's company. At her insistence, I moved into the loft apartment in her house, and we had a grand old life together. I liked being with her so much that I lived with her for three years until she passed away of complications of a lung infection.

The funeral was quite big, and I was very much impressed by how truly sad everyone was. No one had ever expected a life without Aunt Ruthie, including me, and it was quite a shock to realize that one was expected to pick up and keep living without her. After everything had calmed down, I found myself executor of her estate as well as her chief benefactor. Most of the American side of the family didn't even bother to show up for the funeral, but they still had the gall to be very unpleasantly surprised to find that she had left the great majority of her money to me. For my part, I was absolutely stunned to realize just how much it was.



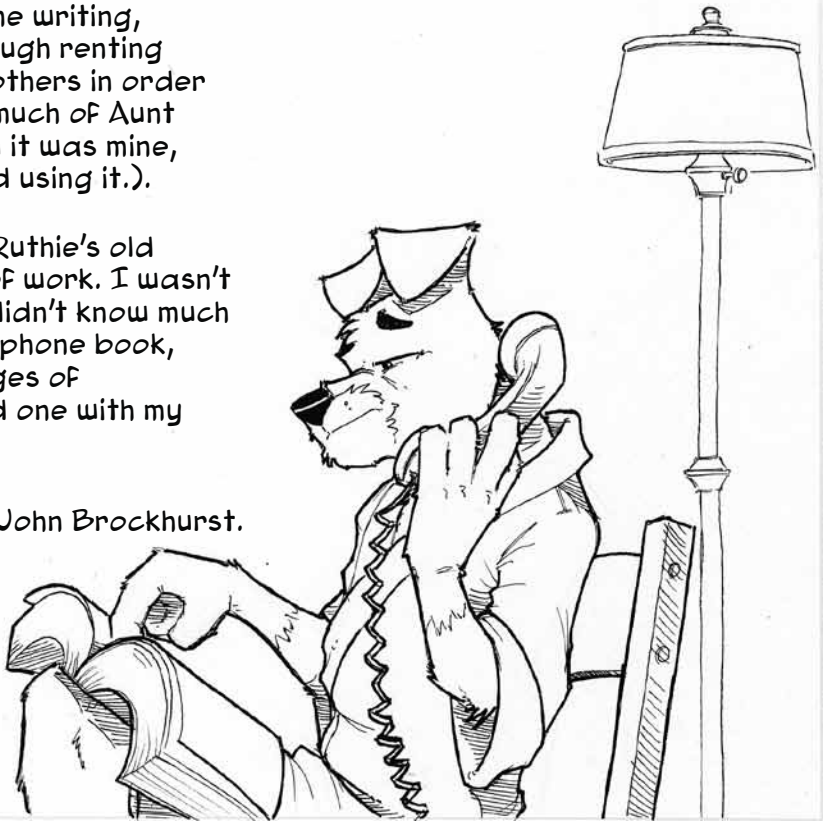
The first person who showed up on my door after the funeral with a sympathetic smile and a basket of fresh-baked biscuits that could have fed me for months was Mrs. Nussbaum. She was a little taken aback to realize that the young man from England was a fageleh, but she seemed to take it in stride.

Always a very no-nonsense woman was our Mrs. N., even in those days.

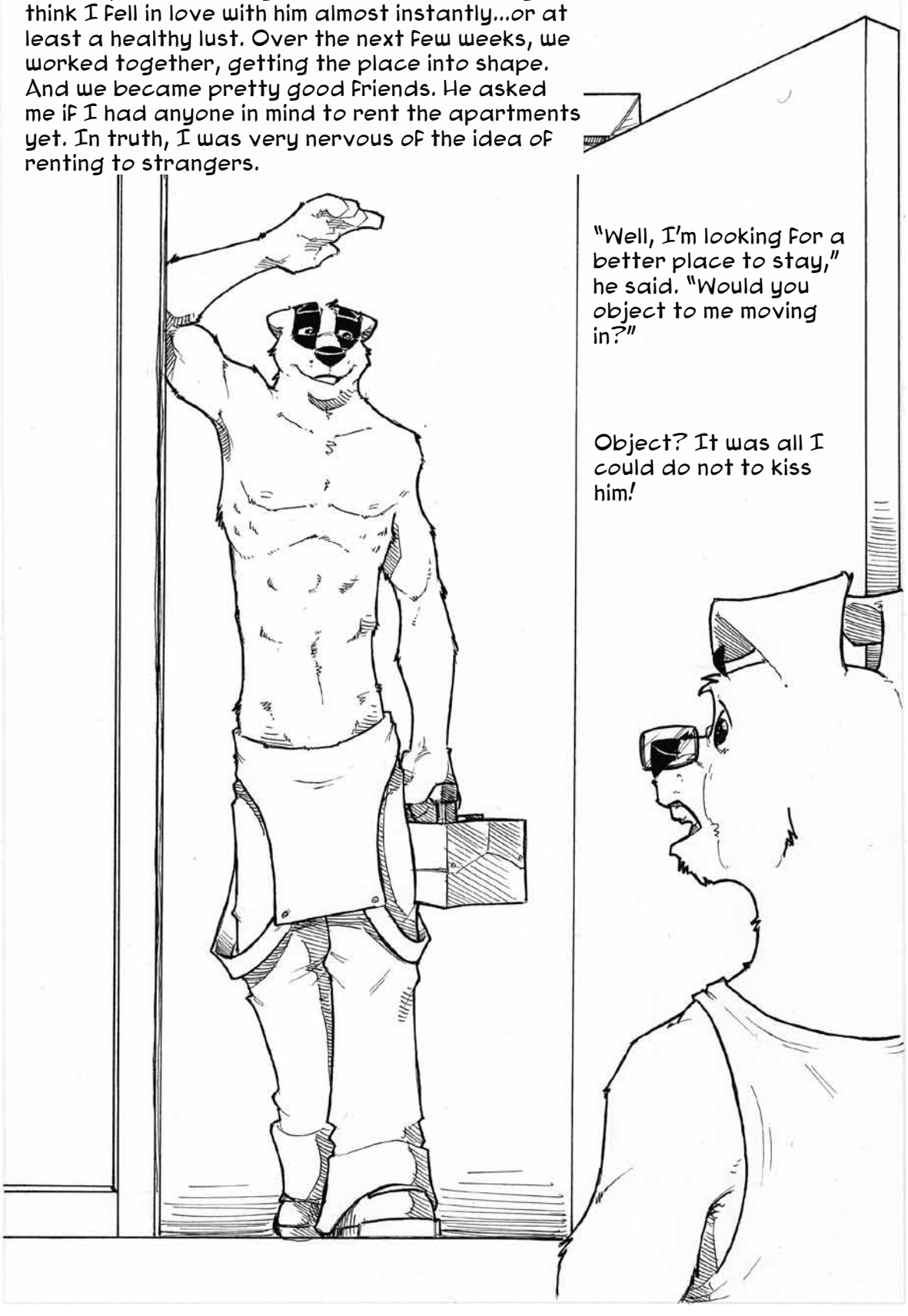
I had a plan to do some writing, supporting myself through renting parts of the house to others in order to avoid using up too much of Aunt Ruthie's money (I knew it was mine, but I still felt awkward using it.).

Although I loved Aunt Ruthie's old house, it needed a lot of work. I wasn't afraid of labor, but I didn't know much about it. I picked up a phone book, flipped through the pages of carpenters, and picked one with my eyes closed.

And that's how I met John Brockhurst.



John came over, wearing overalls, carrying a toolbox, and sweating in the heat of late May. I think I fell in love with him almost instantly...or at least a healthy lust. Over the next few weeks, we worked together, getting the place into shape. And we became pretty good friends. He asked me if I had anyone in mind to rent the apartments yet. In truth, I was very nervous of the idea of renting to strangers.


"Well, I'm looking for a better place to stay," he said. "Would you object to me moving in?"
Object? It was all I could do not to kiss him!

John was great companion for me, helping me through those days after Aunt Ruthie's death and generally helping me to change from the somewhat insular person I had been to a much more outgoing and active person. There were places he knew and things he liked to do that Aunt Ruthie simply wasn't interested in. At his instigation, we started exploring the area by bicycle and later by car. Boston is really a wonderful city, and my love affair with her is nowhere near over. And I have John to thank for introducing me to the fine, grand old lady she can be.

John was, and still is, really, one daring young man. He'd try anything once and the best way to get him to do something was to tell him that he couldn't. At his instigation, I learned to duck past signs that said No Admittance, and to stomp past signs that say Keep Off the Grass. Needless to say, he reminded me of an older Colin, and I'm sure that this had something to do with my attraction to him.

Over the next couple of months, John felt me out regarding my feelings on love and dating. I answered as truthfully as I could, but, remembering some of the lost friendships back in England, I was reticent to admit to my sexuality, or to the fact that I found him so bloody sexy. In retrospect, he was hitting on me pretty hard, but, although I was his senior by a couple of years, I was still fairly innocent, and I somehow managed to miss his "less than subtle" hinting.

Finally, one night, he point-blank asked me, "Paulie, are you gay?"

I was a bit taken aback, but, in my shy and awkward way, I tried to admit that I was, that I hoped he'd understand that, and that we could still be friends. Embarrassed and a little scared, I ran off. I just wandered around Boston for a while, thinking that John must've seen me checking him out while he was working shirtless, or some such thing. I was half-convinced I'd return to find him gone and half-convinced I'd return to find him ready to stomp the shite out of me.

Instead, I arrived home to find him in my apartment, which was not unusual, but naked and in my bed, which was. While I stammered in the doorway, he proceeded to tell me how sexy he thought I was, and how much he had wanted to join me in bed from day one. He then lifted the blanket and patted the mattress beside him. Needless to say, I hurried to join him.

And that's how we became lovers.

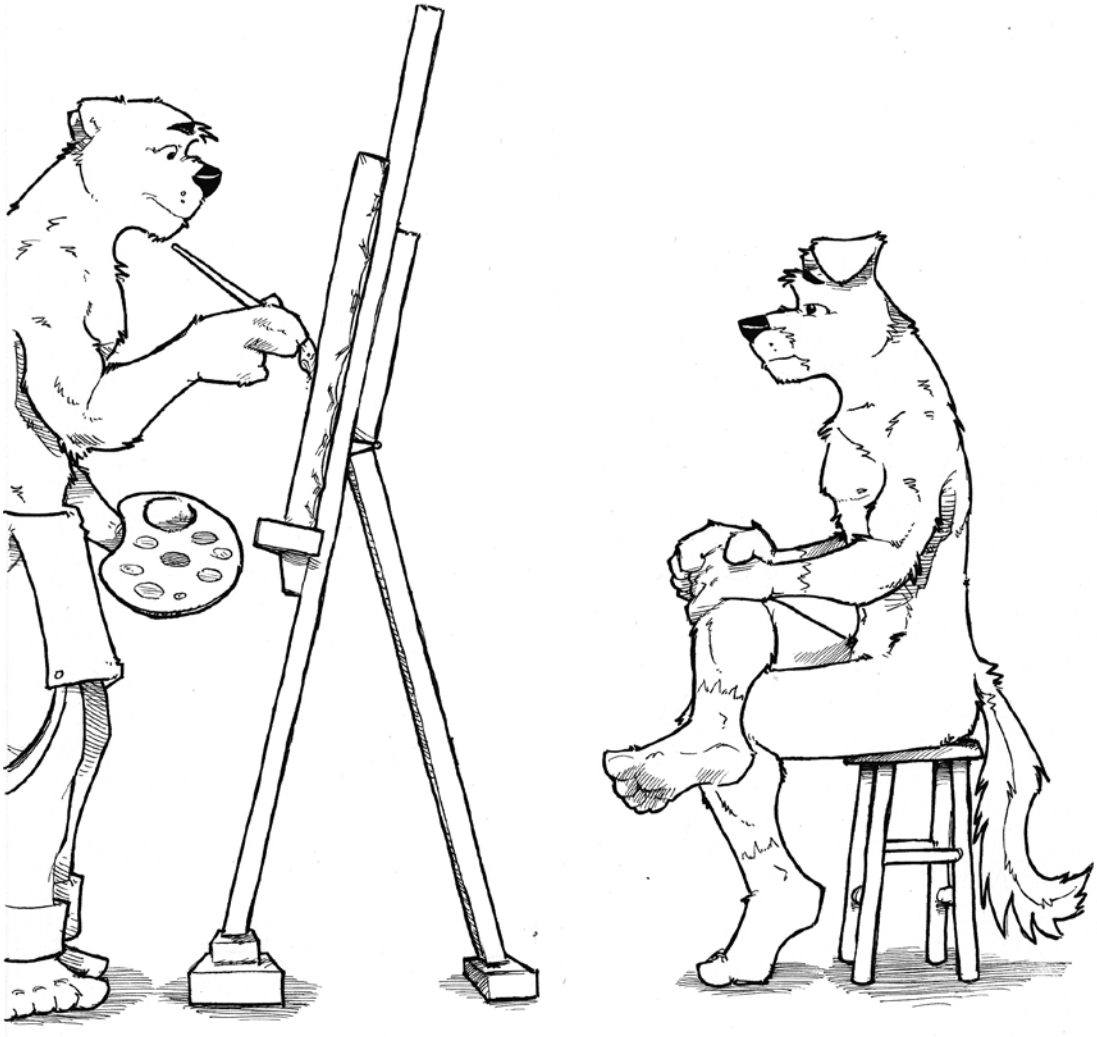
I met the rest of Boston's gay scene through John, who'd been a part of it for years. He showed me Triangle Books, the South End, and the ever-changing kaleidoscope of gay bars, queer bathhouses, and porn shops. I never did connect with the scene, per se, but, with John's blessing, I did get to meet and...well...experiment with a number of very attractve men.

John never minded; he enjoyed doing the same. As long as we ended up back together, neither of us minded who the other one chose to spend time with.

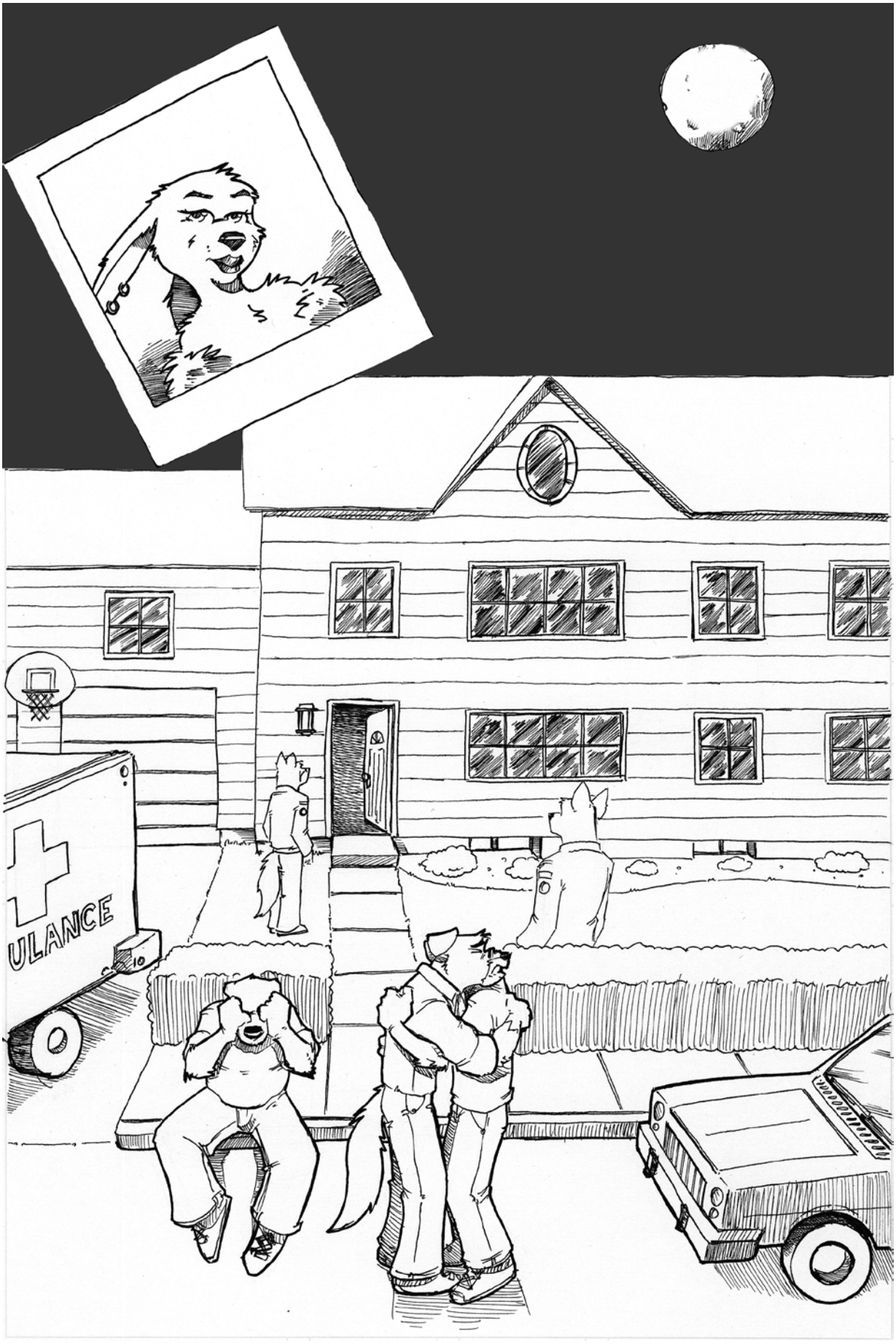
Arthur came into the scene in late 1977. He was a young man from Connecticut, as lost as I had been. At 18, he was already burly and hairy, and already a very sexy young man.

John met him first, and, after a few chance meetings, arranged to have him come over to meet me.

I wasn't enormously impressed with Arthur when I first met him, I'll admit. He was shy, and I thought him a little dull. But then, John coaxed him to bring out his sketchpad, and I saw how much passion this young man had. I was fascinated by Arthur's art, and I asked him to draw a portrait of me, which I'm sure you've seen. The lovemaking between us was almost secondary to the art, and the three of us became fairly inseparable. Arthur moved into the attic with me shortly thereafter, and we all lived together for years. Mostly, we stayed within the three of us, but we each still dabbled with others.



Please remember that this was the late 70s. We were only just beginning to realize that something was preying on our community, striking us down. And we didn't connect it to sex until much later. Although people we knew died, it took a big shock to really bring us out of our stupidity and ignorance.


ULANCE

His name was Greg, and he was a really lovely young man. Although they'd repeatedly told him that he was always too pretty for a boy, his parents had rejected it when he'd decided to dress as a girl. We mostly called him Gingersnap, and he liked that. I don't remember which of us met him first...possibly John, as he was always more active in clubbing than Arthur and I were.

It was around this time that John decided to move into what's now Ken's apartment, because he had begun to drift away a bit from the pair of us. Arthur and I still loved him, of course, and we still got together as friends, but we didn't really feel like lovers any more. That happens, sometimes, I guess. Arthur and I were now living together on the top floor; and Greg was on the bottom floor.

It was 1983, and Greg had been living with us in Kinsey Circle for about 9 months when he was diagnosed as having full-blown AIDS. None of us were home the night he got the news, or we might've been able to do something.

Neighbors who'd heard the gunshot had called the police, and we returned from a night of drinking to find our safe haven overrun with people who had to explain to us that one of our best friends had died, and why he'd taken his own life.

I kept thinking, It could have been me. I've slept with Graham. I need to get tested. Oh, God...I don't want to die like that.

Although we all tested clean, I had made my decision. I was going to stop fooling around. John and Arthur were less keen on the idea, but they both understood, and they tentatively agreed. We decided to celebrate it with a big party, like a wake...I've always thought that when I died, I'd want a big, jolly, Irish wake rather than a normal funeral. Having no intention of dying, and not being in a position to be present for my own funeral, my promiscuity got the honors instead.

Using a bit of "mad money" I had lying around, we rented O'Donnell's, which was then one of the finest gay bars in the city. All of ours friends came, and we had a big mocking drink-up, toasting the "loss" over and over again. Truth be told, I was a bit relieved to be getting out of the game.

I don't remember what time the party started to wind down, because I was more than a little inebriated by the time it happened. If I hadn't been, who knows whether or not things would've gone as they did.

One of many people who attended the party was Keith

I'd slept with him a few times, several years previous, and he was carrying a torch. Keith tried to coax me back into the game, but I held strong.

Arthur, his inhibitions lowered with every drink, wasn't so reticent, and the three of us stumbled home, while John went to celebrate elsewhere.

If I'd been sober enough to get the door to John's apartment, to let Arthur and Keith do it there, things might've been different. But I couldn't seem to work the keys...

So we went up to the attic apartment that Arthur and I had shared for so many years.

I watched Keith struggling to get a very drunken Arthur undressed, and then I sat there, watching, as he tried to keep our artist interested...

But Arthur passed out, and Keith couldn't wake him up. We sat there for a bit, giggling at Arthur's snoring. And then Keith was in my lap, unbuttoning my pants, kissing me...and I should have stopped him.

But I thought, Well, what's the harm in one last fling?

I have replayed that sentence in my mind...you can't imagine how many times.

Keith called us. I remember being strangely touched that at least he cared enough about us to do that. He called everyone he'd slept with recently and told them that he'd tested positive. Somehow I knew, even before getting my test results back, that I would be testing positive as well. It didn't stop the sickness in my stomach when I heard the results, though. I'd be lying if I said I hadn't considered taking my life, but then I thought back to Greg, and to that horrible night. I remembered that horrible feeling I'd felt coming home and seeing the police lights flashing, hearing the news.

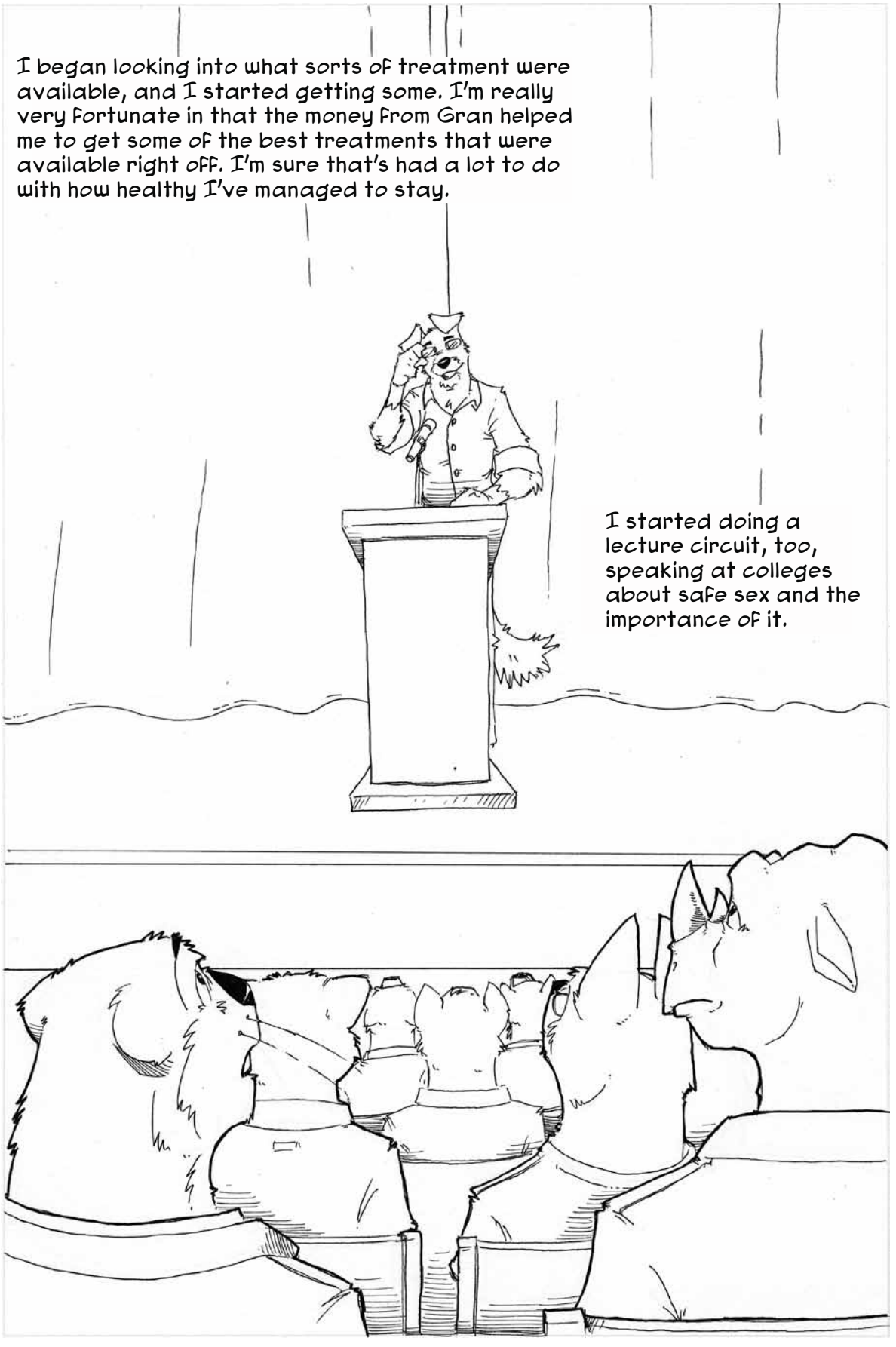
No, that was definitely not something I could put the ones I loved through.

Arthur couldn't stop blaming himself for bringing Keith home, despite my attempts to assure him it wasn't his fault. One night, I came home to find Arthur gone, with a note saying he'd gone to New York to get his head together. I was upset that he left, but I understood. It was scary. If I'd been able to run away from it, I would've too. Every once in a while, he'd drop a letter, or give me a phone call, but tt was about 7 years before I saw him again.

John and I kind of drifted apart, through no fault on either side. Although he was very supportive, I was determined not to lean on anybody, and I pushed him away. I even helped him buy Triangle Books with some of my Aunt Ruthie's money, just to give him a project other than me to be involved with.

I did a lot of drinking after that, and a lot of self-pitying. And neither one did me a lot of good. I pretty much stayed in my apartment all the time for about two months. And then, one morning, I realized that I wasn't dead, so I had better stop acting like I was. And that's when I rejoined the human race.

I called all my old friends and explained the situation. Most were supportive, though a few of them seemed shocked and didn't really seem to want contact with me. I forgave them, and most of them drifted back, once the shock had worn off. I wrote a few articles about the experience which were well-received, and some pretty awful poetry, which wasn't. I also grew up, fast, and I promised myself not to let life drag me around any more, the way I had been doing. I'd been letting other people make all of my decisions for me - Colin, John, even Keith. But I couldn't let that continue. I could live for myself, as well as for others, but it was my life, and I had to live it, and to live with what had happened.


I began looking into what sorts of treatment were available, and I started getting some. I'm really very fortunate in that the money from Gran helped me to get some of the best treatments that were available right off. I'm sure that's had a lot to do with how healthy I've managed to stay.
I started doing a lecture circuit, too, speaking at colleges about safe sex and the importance of it.

That's how I met Doug, actually. And knowing him, having him in my life, was some of the best treatment possible. Things were rocky at the beginning, but we've been together for 13 years, now, and I haven't regretted a day of it.

But that's definitely a story for another day.

Wow...
Mmm...

Don't you have school in the morning?
I love the company, but you need to get some sleep.

Is that really the time? √Shit. I've still got some homework to do.
Well, thank you, Paulie. Man...I'd love to hear some more stories sometime.

Anytime, dear. Thank you for distracting me for a bit. Give Taye a kiss goodnight for me?
I will.

Night, Paulie.
Good night, Marty.

sigh
I miss you. Come home soon.
Love, Paulie

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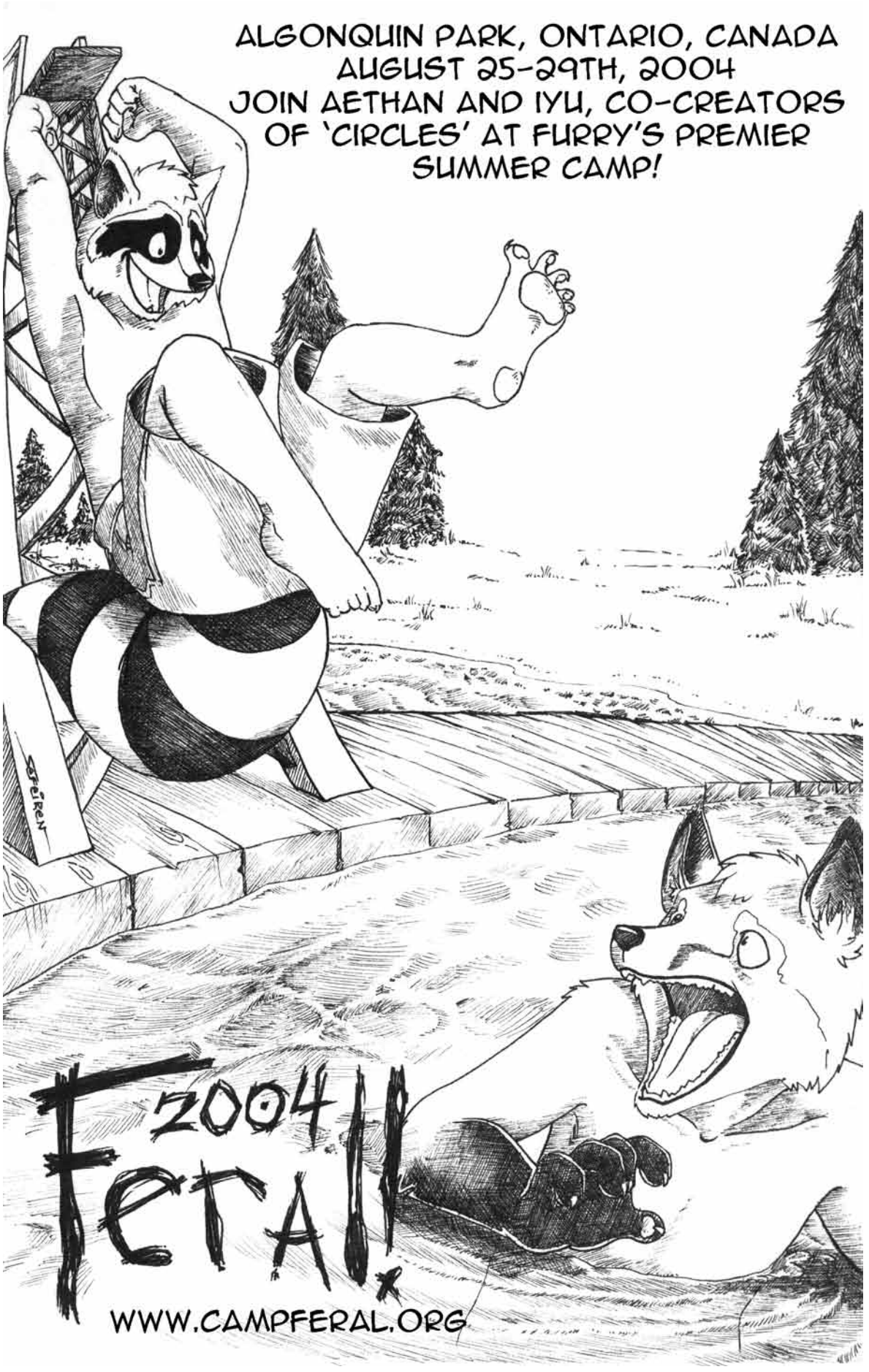
Sometimes people make mistakes, and they need to take responsibility for what they have done. that's a lesson Doug has been learning, and his return to Kinsey Circle brings with it a revelation and a new twist to his relationship with Paulie. Will their relationship survive the new roles they must assume? Find out in Circles Issue Six: Life is What Happens to You When You're Busy Making Other Plans.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